

◆ Classroom Spice ◆

Volume 1, Issue 3 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

September 1998

| The Mascot Debate | <i>Native American Resources for the Classroom Teacher</i> | | Celebrating Hispanic Month |
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| <p>Native Americans do not agree on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using Indian mascots. Not everyone even has an opinion, but those who do have an opinion tend to feel strongly about it. So let us look at reasons often cited by Native Americans against the use of mascots. Dr. Cornel Pewewardy, a Native Oklahoman, feels very strongly about the power of mascots to affect the perception of Native American and non-Native Americans alike and to perpetuate many stereotypes commonly associated with Native Americans. One argument is that most of the Indian Mascots are modeled after "Plains Indians" thus continuing the misconception that all Indians were Plains Indians. Think about the majority of team mascots and you will realize that they are usually animals, thus the use of Indian Mascots tends to equate Native Americans with animals. Would any team use a mascot of lawyers, doctors, ministers, women, African Americans, or Hispanics? So why is it alright to use Native Americans? And if you realize that parts of the traditional dress and music and culture of the Native American has religious connotation, that's like having mascots of priests or rabbis or ministers? Most would think that is poor</p> <p><i>(Continued on page 3)</i></p> | <p>The Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) has received several inquiries as to resources available in the teaching of Native American culture. In response to these requests, and the frequent teaching of Native American units in the fall of the school year, the majority of this issue is dedicated to the topic of Native Americans. There are many good resources on Native American culture. We can only touch upon a few in this issue, but will continue to address such resources in future issues, just as we have in past issues. One of my favorite resources was published by the Oklahoma State Department of Education in 1992, and is still available through SDE. <i>Oklahoma's Federally-Recognized Indian Tribes</i>, was developed to "provide support to ensure that our Indian youth will be thinkers and problem solvers. ...This handbook will give a</p> | <p>helping hand to those interested in making certain the Native American youth become more involved citizens while retaining their unique cultures and languages." In addition the handbook provides invaluable information for teachers to use with non-Indian students to help them better understand the Indian culture. It is a collection of previously published curriculum guides and includes the following units: Oklahoma's Indian People: Images of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow; Year of the Indian Poster Series; Native American Community Involvement; Oklahoma Indian American School Guide; Oklahoma Indian and Nature Guide; and Indian Education Curriculum Guidelines. It is jam packed full of history, activities, lesson plans, posters, and cross curriculum connections which cover kindergarten up through 12th grade. If your</p> <p><i>(Continued on page 3)</i></p> | <p>Did you know that September 15th-October 15th is Hispanic Month? This is an excellent opportunity to include information about successful Hispanics in whatever content area you teach. A publication by Globe, <i>The Newcomers Series: Hispanics in U.S. History, 1865 to the Present</i> includes 20 chapters covering information on prominent and lesser known Hispanics. It includes background information, and comprehension checks for each chapter. It is designed to be used as a complete course in ethnic studies or to supplement your current middle school through high school text.</p> <p>Another excellent resource is Weston Walch's <i>Latino Heroes of the Civil War</i>. This teacher resource book has fascinating information on the war and on six Latino participants: David Farrugut, Federico Cavada, Loeta Velazquez, Santos Benavides, Rafael Chacon, and Manuel Chaves. It can be used from middle school through high school and includes blackline</p> <p><i>(Continued on page 3)</i></p> |
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The Great Law of Peace

Who were the
Haudenosaunee?

What do they have
to do with you?

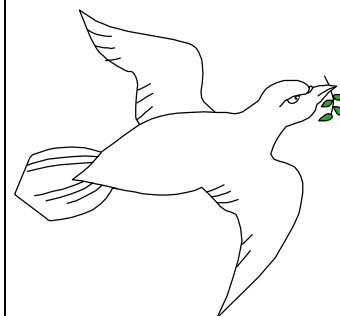
Do your students know that the democratic model our founding fathers used to formulate the U.S. Constitution was not British or French, but Native American? The U. S. Government has an incredible similarity to the Haudenosaunee's Grand Council. The Haudenosaunee Six Nations Confederacy was based on a philosophy of liberty, law of the land, the balance of power, the inherent rights of the people, and a system of checks and balances. Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and American Indian Agent George Morgan were among those who helped create the American government and were familiar with the Iroquois Confederacy.

Why are so few people aware of the connection? One hypothesis is related to the power of women in the Iroquoian government. One of the few differences between the Iroquoian and

U.S. governments is in the judicial branch, i.e., the supreme court. The Iroquoian "supreme court" was comprised of **women**. Remember many Native American were based on a matrilineal culture, where property and/or power were in the hands of women. In the Iroquoian Nation women of power were responsible for nominating the chief statesmen and for setting qualification standards. The qualification standards they set for Iroquoian statesman were much higher than those set by our founding fathers for those serving in the U.S. Congress or U.S. Senate. Iroquoian women were also given the power to impeach any leaders they felt were failing to serve the best interests of their people.

Even the American symbol, Tree of Liberty, is an offshoot of the Haudenosaunee's Tree of Peace. It is fascinating to compare the U.S. Constitution and the Great

Law of Kaianerekowa of the Haudenosaunee, Iroquois Confederacy. When read side by side the parallels of the two documents are obvious, even to the lay reader. For more information stop by the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) or call 1-405-224-3140 Ext. 291) for a copy of Dr. Schaaf's research article on the Great Law of Peace including the side by side recounting of the U.S. Constitution and the Great Law of Peace.



Keepers of the Earth

If you are not familiar with



the Keepers series by Joseph Bruchac (of the Abenaki tribe) and Michael Caduto you are missing some wonderful resources. The series includes

Keepers of the Earth; Keepers of the Animals; Keepers of Life: Discovering Plants through Native American Stories and Earth Activities for Children; and *Keepers of the Night*. These books offer Native American stories and activities which are interdisciplinary and particularly easily used with the natural sciences. Each book has a Companion Teacher's Guide available which provides supplementary text, activity guidelines, and suggested further readings. In addition there are tapes available featuring Joseph Bruchac

reading the Native American legends from each book.

Dr. Knapp, a professor of outdoor teacher education at NIU, says *Keeper of the Earth* "contains carefully selected and illustrated Native American stories, many excellent indoor and outdoor learning activities for young people and helpful sources and suggestions for teaching ecology. All three components are artfully blended to give the reader

the clear message that we are all connected to nature and that we need to understand and care for the Earth. Everyone must read and use this important survival manual."

While not in the Keeper series there is another book and tape by one of the Keeper author's Michael Lacapa, *Native American Coyote Stories*, which will be enjoyed by all age for its humor. Stop by the MRC and check these out.

(Native American Resources—Continued)

school or school district doesn't have a

copy, contact the State Department of Education in OKC. Weston Walch has numerous materials dealing with Native Americans, two of which are *Native Americans: A Thematic Unit on Converging Cultures*, and *16 Extraordinary Native Americans*. The former is a reproducible book which focuses on the study of Native American cultures and European cultures at the point of contact. It is set up to assist teachers of middle school through high school students. It provides teacher tips, student pages and activities, and of course, answer keys. The case studies represent tribes from around the country not just the traditional east coast Indians. The second publication mentioned provides background text on each individual plus comprehension and application questions, and additional activities for a few of the honorees. This book is best suited for upper elementary and/or middle school.

An excellent primary resource is *Using Literature to Learn About the First Americans: A Thematic Approach to Cultural Awareness*, published by Incentive Publications. It provides a fully integrated 2-week long Native American study, with lesson plans, teacher's guide and worksheets. It also covers Native American cultures from all areas of the country.

(Hispanic Month—Continued)

masters, follow-up activities, social studies/language arts objectives, and additional teacher resources. Also look at Walch's *16 Extraordinary Hispanic Americans*, which was reviewed in Issue 2 of *Classroom Spice*.

A book useful to the primary teacher is *Look What We've Brought You From Mexico: Crafts, Games, Recipes, Stories, and Other Cultural Activities from Mexican-American* by Phyllis Shalant. From historical notes, to mathematics, songs, and recipes, this book has it all. Easily used throughout the year.

The Literature Connection

A regular feature of *Classroom Spice* is a review of children's literature K-12 which can be used in a classroom or school to help promote multicultural education. Even if you do not teach in an area where the book is particularly appropriate you might find that it is a book you would like to see in your school library, and hopefully a book that you would personally benefit from reading.

Teachers in schools across America



regularly tell the story of Columbus discovering the New World. But that story is always told from a European perspective. History shows that there already existed culture and civilization in the Americas long before Columbus arrived. *Encounter*, by award winning author Jane Yolen, tells the story of the first meeting of Columbus and his men with the residents of San Salvador. The story is told from the perspective of a young Taino Indian boy. The illustrations in the book are dramatic and powerful. The story is simple, but poignant. The author includes a note at the end to give additional historical information making

this book relevant into at least junior high.

A new series authored by Sherrin Watkins, a lawyer in Okmulgee, Oklahoma and of Native American heritage is about the Greyfeather family, a present day Shawnee family. These primary books include humor, Native American culture, and everyday family situations. *White Bead Ceremony* is about how 4-year-old Mary Greyfeather gets her Shawnee name, and includes 32 picture cards with Shawnee words and a pronunciation guide.



Green Snake Ceremony is about a Shawnee tradition to bring luck and health to a person. The book also includes background information on snakes. These books are wonderful for the elementary classroom.

An excellent resource for middle school, junior high and high school is *American Indians in America: Volume 2—The later 18th Century to the Present* by Jayne Clark Jones and published by Lerner Publications. The *School Library Journal* describes this book as "One of the freshest and fairest summaries of recent Indian—white history available, masterfully done." It includes history, culture, and culminates with a unit on contributions to American life made by American Indians in various fields such as government, the arts, and sports. It helps students to see American Indians in a

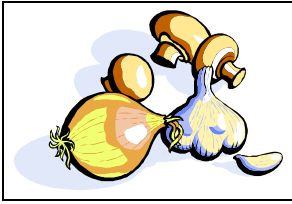
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(The Mascot Debate—Continued)

taste, yet most people don't think about the implications for using Native American Mascots. Related to this is the tendency to always depict the Native American Mascot as violent and angry, not a particularly flattering nor accurate depiction of Native Americans. Often when teams use Native American mascots they also use offensive stereotypical language such as "scalp" or "savages" or "squaw." No not all Native Americans take offense at the use of Indian Mascots, but how many must be offended for this to be considered inappropriate? How long will we allow denigrating stereotypes

to be used by and promoted in

society? Just because you are an Atlanta baseball fan or a Washington football fan, does not mean you are a bigot, but racism and prejudice have support in the pain and insult that we allow "others" to inflict. So if you are in a position to change a mascot, think twice about what you select. If your school or team already has a Native American mascot think about ways that it can be used (if indeed it must be used), that will be more culturally sensitive to Native Americans and help nonNative Americans to become aware of "real" Native American culture.—Food for thought?



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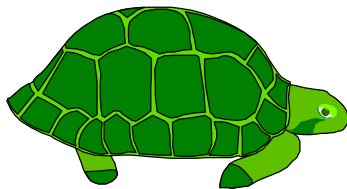
Native American Theme; Hispanic Month

(Literature Connection—Cont'd)
different light from the usual history accounts.

Children's Press publishes a series designed for primary students, New True Books, which includes a number of books on Native American tribes. These are not just the most common such as the Apache or Cherokee, but also lesser known tribes such as the Cayuga, Oneida, or Tuscarora.

Another Children's Press series which is historically based and appropriate for use in the upper elementary class is The Cornerstones of Freedom series which includes such titles as *The Battle of the Little Bighorn*, *The Trail of Tears*, and *Tecumseh*. Also of use to the elementary classroom is *North America Indian Sign Language* by Karen

Liptak, published by Scholastic, which provides information and graphic illustrations of the common sign language used among the various tribes of Plains Indians. Another title for the lower elementary classroom is *And Still the Turtle Watched* by Sheila MacGill-Callahan a story about a turtle shaped rock's life from its early



creation by a Native American to its display in the New York Botanical Garden. A simple but thoughtful story even the young can appreciate. Probably many of you have seen *Ten Little Rabbits* by Virginia Grossman, and while the illustrations in it are wonderful, and information at the end of

the book on 10 different tribes is well done, the story itself uses rabbits costumed in Native American regalia, and is very insulting to many Native Americans as it objectifies them (who would think of counting African Americans, Caucasians, etc. but Indians? No problem?) Think twice about selecting this one!

There are historically based books which are available and beneficial to upper elementary through junior high. *Native American Doctor: The Story of Susan LaFlesche Picotte*, by Jeri Ferris a story about the first Native American woman to graduate from medical school.

Weaving a California Tradition: A Native American Basketmaker, by Linda Yamane, is for upper elementary and older. It is a story about reviving the Mono basket weaving tradition

(written with a number of interdisciplinary references, particularly to biology). A similarly age appropriate book is *Pueblo Storyteller* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith which tells of the Cochiti People of today and their cultural ties to the past. All these books can be seen at the MRC.

Many living in today's world are attempting to understand, relearn, and share their rich heritage.

Perhaps the classroom is one medium to facilitate this?